

October 2007

Mental Illness: *Facts and Numbers*

Millions of Americans are affected by mental illness, yet remain untreated or under-treated for their conditions. Learn the facts about mental illness.

- One in four adults—approximately 57.7 million Americans— experience a mental health disorder in a given year. One in seventeen lives with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder ¹, and about one in ten children have a serious mental or emotional disorder.²
- About 2.4 million Americans, or 1.1 percent of the adult population, lives with schizophrenia.¹
- Bipolar disorder affects 5.7 million American adults, approximately 2.6 percent of the adult population per year.¹
- Major depressive disorder affects 6.7 percent of adults, or about 14.8 million American adults.¹ According to the 2004 World Health Report, this is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and Canada in ages between 15 to 44.³
- Anxiety disorders, which include panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder, and phobias, affect about 18.1 percent of adults, an estimated 40 million individuals. Anxiety disorders frequently co-occur with depression or addiction disorders.¹
- An estimated 5.2 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.⁴ Of adults using homeless services, thirty-one percent reported having a combination of these conditions.⁵
- Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, three-quarters by age 24.⁶ Despite effective treatments, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between first onset of symptoms and when people seek and receive treatment.⁷
- Fewer than one-third of adults and half of children with a diagnosable mental disorder receive any mental health services in a given year.²
- Racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to have access to mental health services and often receive a poorer quality of care.⁸
- In the U.S., the annual economic, indirect cost of mental illnesses is estimated to be \$79 billion. Most of that amount—approximately \$63 billion—reflects the loss of productivity as a result of illnesses.²
- Individuals with serious mental illness face an increased risk of having chronic medical conditions.⁹ Adults with serious mental illness die 25 years younger than other Americans, largely due to treatable medical conditions.¹⁰
- Suicide is the eleventh leading cause of death in the U.S., and the third leading cause of death for ages 10 to 24 years. More than 90 percent of those who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental disorder.¹¹

"Simply put, treatment works, if you can get it. But in America today, it is clear that many people living with the most serious and persistent mental illnesses are not provided with the essential treatment they need."

Michael J. Fitzpatrick, Executive Director of NAMI National, Grading the States, 2006 ¹²

- In July 2007, a nationwide report indicated that male veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide as compared with their civilian peers in the general US population . ¹³
- Twenty-four percent of state prisoners and 21 percent of local jail prisoners have a recent history of a mental health disorder.¹⁴ Seventy percent of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental disorder with at least 20 percent experiencing significant functional impairment from a serious mental illness.¹⁵
- Over 50 percent of students with a mental disorder age 14 and older drop out of high school—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.¹⁶

♦♦♦

References

- ¹ National Institute of Mental Health. NIMH: The numbers count— Mental disorders in America. National Institute of Health. Available at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/numbers.cfm>.
- ² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, 1999, pp. 408-409, 411.
- ³ National Institute of Mental Health. NIMH: The numbers count— Mental disorders in America. National Institute of Health. Available at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/numbers.cfm>. [Citing 2004 World Health Report Annex Table 3 Burden of disease in DALYs by cause, sex, and mortality stratum in WHO regions, estimates for 2002. Geneva: World Health Organization].
- ⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2007, February). National Outcome Measures (NOMs) for Co-Occurring Disorders. [Citing 2005 data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)].
- ⁵ Burt, M. (2001). What will it take to end homelessness? Urban Institute: Washington, D.C., p. 3. Available at http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/end_homelessness.pdf
- ⁶ Kessler, R., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, & Walters, E. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62, June 2005, 593-602.
- ⁷ Wang, P., Berglund, P., Olfson, M., Pincus, H., Wells, K. & Kessler, R. (2005). Failure and delay in initial treatment contact after first onset of mental disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62, June 2005, 603-613.
- ⁸ New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, *Achieving the Promise: Transforming Mental Health Care in America. Final Report*. United States Department of Health and Human Services: Rockville, MD, 2003, pp. 49-50.
- ⁹ Colton, C.W. & Manderscheid, R.W., (2006, April). Congruencies in increased mortality rates, years of potential life lost, and causes of death among public mental health clients in eight States. *Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy*, 3(2), 1-14. Available at <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?tool=pubmed&pubmedid=16539783>.
- ¹⁰ Manderscheid, R., Druss, B., & Freeman, E. (2007, August 15). *Data to manage the mortality crisis: Recommendations to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*. Washington, D.C.
- ¹¹ National Institute of Mental Health. Suicide in the U.S.: Statistics and prevention. Available at <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/harmsway.cfm>.
- ¹² National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2006). *Grading the states: A report on America's health care system for serious mental illness*. Arlington, VA.
- ¹³ Kaplan, M.S., Huguet, N., McFarland, B., & Newsom, J.T. (2007). Suicide among male veterans: A perspective population-based study. *Journal of Epidemiol Community Health*, 61(7), 619-624.
- ¹⁴ Glaze, L.E. & James, D.J. (2006, September). *Mental Health Problems of Prison and Jail Inmates*. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics: Washington, D.C.
- ¹⁵ Skowrya, K.R. & Cocozza, J.J. (2007) *Blueprint for change*. National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice; Policy Research Associates, Inc. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Available at <http://www.ncmhjj.com/Blueprint/default.shtml>.
- ¹⁶ U.S. Department of Education. *Twenty-third annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act*. Washington, D.C., 2006.